

# Career Services Goes High Speed

Student Services

The ring of a bell at six-minute intervals, round-robin participation, animated conversations, handshakes and smiles gave the event

the high-energy atmosphere of speed dating. But the goal of this matchmaking wasn't a date; it was a career.

JCCC Career Services hosted its first Speed Networking event in the spring semester giving 23 students in business programs (paralegal, business administration, business office technology, accounting, and business entrepreneurship) the opportunity to network with employers. Fourteen employers participated.

"This is a good project, and the wave of the future," said Sylvia Kenner, transcription department manager, Shawnee Mission Medical Center. "You can get a lot of information about a person in six minutes."

Students agreed.

"It's definitely a way to meet employers," said Rebecca Katz. "For the most part, first impressions can be a big thing. If I am interested in a company, I'll send a thank you note and a resume."

Students were coached to dress professionally and prepare a 30-second commercial about themselves, touting a distinguishing characteristic, education and career aspirations. They received a packet from Career Services explaining networking and suggested questions to ask the interviewer.

"It's awesome to be able get your name out to a number of people," said Sarah Anderson.

In turn, employers wanted exposure to the students, according to Mary Jean Billingsley, program director, Career Services Center. Employers were divided into five groups representing accounting, business office technology, marketing, business entrepreneurship and paralegal. Each student had six minutes with three different employers in their field. The networking event was not meant to be a job fair or formal job interview.

"The students have been really great," said Jackie Vogt, vice president, training and human resources, Bank of Blue Valley. "They are great listeners and ask good questions."

Student Melissa Bolend said she found the




Speed Networking event motivating. "I learned there are a lot of jobs out there with my level of education. I will definitely follow up with some of these employers."

"The six minutes went really fast for me," said Katie Brown. "It was a good experience. The employers were friendly and gave good feedback. I learned about tools and traits that I could become more familiar with to help me with what I want to do."

At break, employers were out there networking among themselves or answering further questions from students.

"Networking has had a big impact on my career. I am pleased to be part of this," said Melissa Sorrell, community events coordinator, St. Luke's Hospice.

In response to feedback from students who indicated they wanted more information on how to prepare for a job search and about latest hiring trends, the Career Services Center did not host a Career Fair in spring 2007.

Instead, the Center piloted the Spring Employer Networking Series in partnership with JCCC business programs. The series consisted of Speed Networking; Employers Talk, a panel a presentation about skills employers are looking for in competitive job candidates; and Business Luncheon for a select group of business program students to network with employers. 

Katie Brown met with Jackie Vogt, vice president, Training and Human Resources, Bank of Blue Valley.



Students, like Sarah Gibson, appeared confident and forthright during the time with employers.

